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SUBJECT: GERMANY/IRAN: GROENING ON EU DELIBERATIONS AND EL
BARADEI VISIT

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Jeff Rathke for reasons 1.4
(b) and (d).

EU Deliberations

11. (C) Political MC met with German Arms Control Commissioner Fritz Groening April 21 to discuss EU deliberations on Iran at the April 18 PSC meeting and in advance of the April 28-29 EU GAERC meeting. Groening commented that the P5 1 meeting in Shanghai did not bring conclusive resolution of outstanding questions but did help reinforce EU3 solidarity on the Iran designation list in preparation for the April 18 PSC. Now that Italy appeared to be on board, he was hopeful the designation list would pass silence April 21 without difficulty.

12. (C) Groening said he did not expect EU deliberations on UNSCR 1803 implementation this week at any level. He said it was out of the question that the EU would be ready to adopt 1803 into policy and regulations before the April 28-29 GAERC; Germany was still studying nationally what new steps would be required under 1803. He pointed to (but did not name) other EU member states that would push for a more restrictive interpretation than the EU3 would favor. He said it was conceivable 1803 implementation could be ready by the time of the May GAERC, but declined to be drawn out on what Germany would do to move the process along.

13. (C) Groening further noted that EU autonomous measures would not move quickly; he said that "we must move cautiously" since there is was significant opposition among several EU member states. Groening said he had nothing new to add to the discussion of this matter PolDirs had with Acting Under Secretary Fried.

El Baradei Visit

14. (C) Groening gave a brief readout of FM Steinmeier's April 17 meeting in Berlin with IAEA DG El Baradei, noting that "there was nothing new." He said that El Baradei expressed the view that Iran had come to a strategic decision to achieve the capacity to enrich uranium, but that their progress was not accelerating because of technological problems. El Baradei told Steinmeier that, notwithstanding his assessment of Iran's strategic decision, he believed Supreme Leader Khamenei was open to a negotiated solution as long as it included issues such as Iran's role in the region. Steinmeier reportedly held to the precondition of suspension of enrichment. According to Groening, El Baradei also suggested that the lack of trust between Iran and the West

could make "back channels" useful in influencing Tehran; the Director General did not elaborate on this idea. Groening said he did not have the impression El Baradei was seeking such a role for himself and Germany discounted the idea.

15. (C) Comment/Bio note: Groening celebrated his 65th birthday on April 17 and will be retiring June 30. He seemed extremely detached and weary during the conversation, speaking laboriously and quietly, offering none of his usual barbs and criticism of U.S. policy. No successor to Groening has been named officially yet. The appointment of a new head of the arms control division in the Foreign Office ideally would present an opportunity to encourage new thinking in the German bureaucracy, in particular on matters like CFE and the need for a more active approach on Iran sanctions. Somewhat improved coordination with the U.S. might result. But the arms control/disarmament ideology is firmly entrenched in the Foreign Office and in German policy circles; and is viewed favorably in public-opinion polling as well. It is a centerpiece of strategic thinking in FM Steinmeier's SPD especially, and the Social Democrats are unlikely to abandon it in the run-up to the 2009 federal election. Therefore we expect the broad outlines of German arms control/disarmament policy to endure after Groening's departure. End comment.
TIMKEN JR